

Copy
Divine Mercy the best Security;

N^o 12

A

Thanksgiving-Sermon;

Preach'd in the Parish-Church of
LED BURY in **HEREFORDSHIRE**,
Nov. the 5th. 1710.

By **JOHN WALKER**, M. A.
Vicar of *Ledbury*. *K*

Say ye not, a Confederacy, to all them to whom this People shall say, a Confederacy; neither fear ye their Fear nor be afraid. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your Fear, and let him be your Dread.
Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

⓪

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. KNAPLOCK, at the Bishop's-
Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard. M DCC X.

*Walker Edm. Hall
in A. 5 June 1704*

Thine Mercy the best Security

A
Thanksgiving Sermon

Preached in the Church of St. Andrew
at BURLINGTON in Hertfordshire
Nov. the 2nd 1710.

WILLIAM TAYLOR, M.A.
Vicar of St. Andrew's Church.


Printed by J. Stanger, at the Sign of the Ship, in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1710.

BONDON
For B. Knaplock, at the Bishop's
Hall in St. Pauls Church-yard MDCCLX.

TO

Anthony Biddulph,
Samuel Swift, and } Esqs;
John Skipp, }

Samuel Skinner,
John Vobe, and } Gent.
John Skinner, }

Worthy Sirs,

BEING well assur'd that you have
a hearty Concern for our pre-
sent happy Establishment in Church
and State, and for the continuance
of it, I thought that a Discourse
that had nothing else in its View
but God's Glory, and the Publick
Safety, the same that you have,
would not be unacceptable, and
therefore I have made bold to pre-
sent it to you. Happy indeed it
would be for us, if all had the
same Sentiments, and the same

The Dedication.

Zeal for the Prosperity of our Sion, that you have; that a Spirit of Bigottry, and Faction, and Self-interest did not so much disturb and endanger it. But the more earnest and sedulous its avowed Enemies are to do this, the more Industrious and Diligent should its Friends be to supplant and frustrate all their Wiles and Artifices, and to give it all the Security and Support they can.

Such valuable Blessings as it abounds with, do justly call upon and demand of us, to give them both Head, and Heart, and Hand; to exert all that is in our Power for their Defence and Being perpetuated unto us: And they that will not do so much for them, are only Protestants in Masquerade, as Unsincere as Ungrateful. What a fatal Stupidity must we be seiz'd with, if the Adversaries of

our

The Dedication.

our Constitution shall be more indefatigable to Ruin, than we to preserve it? Are true Religion, Liberty and Property, such mean trifling Things, that they are not worth the labouring and contending for? They that so conclude, and so act, must have lost their Reason or their Conscience, be Prodigies of Folly or of Treachery. Such must imagine, that either Providence will do all for us, without our Concurrence and Endeavours; or that we shall be safe under a common Ruin; both which are equally Absurd and Ridiculous; as Irrational, as Provoking. God doth not govern the World by his own immediate and miraculous Efforts and Actings; but by proper Means produced and performed by second Causes, yet under his Influence and Direction. And these are what he expects we should make a due Use of, in order to his Blessing us; and
not

The Dedication.

not by a base and supine Negligence and Indifference, give up all to the cunning and malicious Intrigues of Crafty and Self-designing Achitophels and Plotters.

To suffer our selves to fall into such a State, from which nought but a Miracle, or somewhat extraordinary can recover us, and to hope to be deliver'd from it by God, when he had put it into our own Power to prevent it, is not to trust in but to tempt him; and is more likely to draw down his Vengeance, than Pity on them, that would not Pity themselves.

How much, or how little, any of us hath contributed hereunto, I shall leave to every Man to examine and judge. Tho' this, I think, I may truly affirm, that he is far from deserving the Blessings of Government (especially of so good a One, as we of this Nation may justly boast of) that doth not all
be

The Dedication.

he can to preserve it (in all its main and essential Parts at least) entire and untouch'd, and to transmit it so to latest Posterity. And the best Way to do this, as far as I can judge, will no doubt be, to follow the Advice of a very wise Governor and King, and that is, to Fear God and the King, (or Queen) and not to meddle with them that are given to change, Prov. xxiv. 21. I am,

SIRS,

Your most Respectful

Neighbour and Servant,

JOHN WALKER.

The Dedication

be can to preserve it (in all its
and essential parts at least)
and untouch'd, and to transmit
it to latest posterity. And the
less than to do this, we fear we I
will no doubt be to fol-
low the advice of a very wise Co-
monwealth King, and that is, to
leave God and the King (or Queen)
to meddle with them
given to change. Prov.
I am,

SIR

Your most Respectful

Obsequious and Servant

JOHN WALLER

PSALM CXXIV. 6, 7.

*Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey
to their Teeth. Our Soul is escaped as a Bird
out of the Snare of the Fowlers; the Snare is
broken, and we are delivered.*

AMONG all those many signal Mercies and Deliverances, that God hath particularly blessed this Nation with, by wonderfully preserving it from all hostile Attempts; and smiting all treacherous Plots and Machinations, to ruin and destroy it with Frustration and a Curse, certainly that we this Day remember and celebrate, is as great and miraculous as any: Is such as includes all our Spiritual and Temporal Concerns, and evidently bespeaks God its sole Author. For who indeed but He could have made the Conspirators and Contrivers of that horrid Design, carried on with all the Subtilty and Secrecy imaginable, the Means to unravel and detect it? And who but He, that turns the Hearts of Men whithersoever he pleaseth, could have made them so Cruel and Bloody in their Principles and Practices, so Compassionate and Relenting; and that Compassion, that alone which appeared good in them, the Cause of their being discover'd, of the Manifestation of their
B Villany

Villany and Treason, and so consequently the overthrow of it and themselves? For notwithstanding the natural Sagacity of the King to observe and descry somewhat more than ordinary, in the Matter and Stile of the Letter that was sent to a Noble Lord; yet that he should be so scrupulously careful and earnest to have all Places of Danger searched and examin'd, when the Notice, or rather Intimation that had been given, was so intricate and obscure, must be owing to some higher Impulse; to him to whom all Things * are naked and open. His penetrating Eye soon saw their evil Projects, and the Issues of them: But such was his Goodness, he countermin'd their Underminings, † disappointed their Devices, took the Wife in their own Craftiness, and made the Counsel of the froward to be carried headlong.

Thus then God by this Act of his Mercy, and by the Rescue he hath since given us, when an unjust dispensing Power threaten'd the overturning of our Constitution in Church and State; of Laws, Religion, Liberty, and all that is dear unto us; hath fully demonstrated his Providence and Love for us. His Love, in defeating all Jesuitical and Papistical Complots, and preserving us from the saddest and most astonishing Effects of the blackest and most dismal Condition that could possibly

* Heb. 4. 13.

† Job. 5. 12, 13.

besal us: And his Providence, that nothing, tho' begun and guided by all the Rules of Art and Policy of human Industry and Skill, shall Thrive and Prosper without his Will and Pleasure. The Hearts of Kings are under his Rule and Government, and so are their Kingdoms too; so that, except he hath determin'd their Period and Dissolution; and the Sins of a People, like those of the *Amorites*, are at the full, and force and accelerate a speedy Execution of Vengeance: The most bold and daring Rebel and Plotter doth but run the Risk of his own Ruin, is only the Engineer of his own, and his Confederates Destruction; and like the raging Waves of the Sea, do but dash and split themselves in Pieces against that Rock they so violently threaten and beat upon.

And this is frequently all the Success of those wicked and bloody Undertakers, who would raise their own Fortunes upon the Devastations of Royal Families and Kingdoms. And that saying of our Saviour to St. Peter, * That all who use the Sword, shall perish by the Sword, is to none more applicable than to these; and will admit of this Paraphrase, That all such as study and delight in the unjust Overthrow of others, shall therein find their own Misery and Downfall. Witness the grand Disappointment, the improsperous Event that betided the undermining Villains, the cruel Blood-Hounds of this Day; and that hath so signally distinguish'd

* Mat. 26. 52.

it in our Church's Crier, and in the Hearts of all good Protestants and loyal Christians: And which doth justly call for and Demand of us the most elevated Praises, and sincerest Thankfulness. A grave stupid sort of Silence would not become the *Israelites* of old, when the sound of their Trumpets was to be instrumental to the throwing * down of their Enemies Walls; much less will it now comport with us in a Time wherein we ought to resound the Praises of our great Deliverer. For if any Thing can oblige us to be Thankful, and ever any People had Reason to Praise and Bless God, we of this Nation have, for the repeated Mercy and Deliverance that was effected on this Day. And if the Enjoyment of Gospel Light and Truth; of the Means of Grace and Salvation; of pure and undefiled Religion, of Life and Safety, of Liberty and Property, is a very great and considerable Happiness, and undoubted Matter of Thanksgiving to the merciful Donor of it; and all this the Result and Consequence of our being rescued as at this Time from being a Prey to the *Roman* Eagles; to a superstitious, bigotted and idolatrous Church: How can we without the highest Ingratitude be unconcerned for it; how can we do otherwise than render all Laud and Obedience to him, who hath saved us from our most bitter and enraged Foes? How can we but with Heart and Voice acknowledge and say, † *Great and Marvellous are*

* *Josh. 6. 20.*† *Rev. 15. 3.*

at Ledbury in Herefortshire. 5

*thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are
thy Ways, thou King of Saints. And with the
Psalmist in the Text, Blessed be the Lord, who
hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth. Our Soul
is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowlers;
the Snare is broken, and we are delivered.*

In this Psalm the Holy Prophet expresth
the Sense and Thankfulness of the Church to
God, for his gracious Deliverance of it, from
those imminent Dangers and Evils, that were
ready to fall upon it by its Enemies. And
what doth very fitly exemplifie the Occasion and
Business of this Day: Which is briefly contain'd
in these Two Things; First, In acknowledg-
ing and confessing God alone to be our Deli-
verer: And Secondly, in making him a due
Return of Thanks and Praises for it.

But because the Words do not only prescribe
us our Duty, but also describe in some sort the
Manner of our Deliverance: I shall therefore,
before I come to a more particular Discussion of
them, shew you by Way of Explication, how
nearly the Mercy the Church then, and that we
now celebrate, doth resemble each the other.
But whether the Blessing here meant, and for
which the Psalmist composed this Song of Praise
and Thanksgiving, be their Preservation from
the Attempts and Designs of either the *Phili-
stians* or *Ammonites*, the *Syrians*, *Moabites* or
Egyptians; the *Arabians* or *Idumæans*, all sworn
Adversaries to the Jewish Polity, I shall not
take upon me to determine. However, this is
certain

6 *A Sermon Preach'd*

certain from the whole Matter and Scope of the Psalm, that the Jewish Church was surrounded with such powerful and cruel Enemies, as nought but the Almighty's Hand could rescue and preserve it from utter Ruin. And therefore the Royal Singer begins this his Song of Degrees, with a doubled and repeated Acknowledgement of God's sole Deliverance, * *If the Lord himself had not been on our Side: If the Lord himself had not been on our Side, when Men rose up against us:* When our raging and malicious Assaulters laid their Snares, and prepar'd their Instruments of Death for us, no doubt they had been our Destruction, they had swallowed us up alive.

And was not this likewise our Case; were not we beset and surrounded with the Artillery and Weapons of Death and Confusion with all that the Wit and Malice of treacherous Persecutors could suggest and invent? And did they not happen upon a Plot, that must necessarily have involv'd these Kingdoms in Ruin, had not God been for us and prevented the Blow, and made their helish Designments apparent before they were executed? Alas when they had made the Two great Luminaries, and lesser Stars of the Nation; the King and Queen, our Senators and Councillors, the first Essay of their Fury, and had destroy'd them with one violent Thunder-Clap; no wonder if these ravening Tygers had soon prey'd

* Ver. 1, 2.

at Ledbury in Herefordshire. 7

upon the Weaker ; upon them who had no other defensive Armour than their Innocency and Prayers. But the Prophet proceeds in his Metaphors, and tells us, that had not God check'd and stopp'd them, the proud swelling Waters, their Enemies, like an impetuous Torrent, had * overwhelmed them, and they must have inevitably suffered Shipwrack in that Sea. And afterwards from the unexpectedness and nearness of the Danger, he adds, that they were † escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler. All which is as verifiable and true of us: For what Mercy could we have expected from them, whose main Intention was the total Extirpation of all legal Rights ; except, like unnatural Children, we would have deserted our Religion and Establishment, and submitted to Popery, and all the Mischiefs and Evils consequent thereunto? And surely nothing can more parallel the Similitude in the Text, than the Proximity of our Destruction, when only a few Hours were interposed between the Discovery, and intended Completion of that black Treason.

But blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a Prey unto their Teeth. Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowlers, &c.

In which Words we have (as hath already been noted) these Two Things considerable. *First*, The Manner of God's Dealing with his Church, in the Time of any Publick Distress and Calamity, his delivering it from all Dan-

* Ver. 4, 5.

† Ver. 7.

gers, Plots, and Conspiracies, that may rob and despoil it of its Happiness and Welfare.

Secondly, The Church's Demeanor and Behavior towards God upon that Account.

First, I am to shew you, that God is a Deliverer of his Church and People from impending and present Dangers and Distresses.

And to understand this aright; we are to know that he is infinitely Wise and Powerful, and infinitely Good and Kind; and that therefore he is as able, as willing, to Preserve and Help. He plainly sees thro' all the secret Intreagues and Devices of cunning Politicians; knows all their drift and what they aim at, how darkly soever laid and projected. There is no *Achitophel* or *Machiavel*, work they ever so privily, that can escape his All-discerning Eyes. He is in all Places beholding the Evil and the Good; fully views Mens Hearts and Designs, much more their Actions and Works. And he knows too how to counterplot and disappoint the most hopeful and best concerted Measures of the most subtil Conspirators. He hath Skill and Power to effect it, tho' we have not; can make them fall into the Pit they digged for others, and their mischievous Inventions to light on their own Pates. Men may beat their Brains, and vex their Hearts in studying and contriving how to bring about and accomplish their wicked Policies; but all will be but to little Purpose, if

at Ledbury in Herefordshire. 9

God will blast and infatuate them. * *There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord; says Solomon. He is the Great Governor and Disposer of all Things. All Events and Successes are wholly under his Management; and shall be no farther prosperous, than as they have his Fiat or Will to them. He is the King of all the World, be the People never so impatient; † He sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so inquiet. He is the Almighty Jehovah, who can, and doth perform all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will. || His Hand is not shortned, that it cannot save; nor his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear; except our iniquities make them so, and him to hide his Face from us. He hath made Heaven and Earth; and therefore he can, and will order and direct his own Workmanship, and all the Wheels and Movements of this mighty Fabric. * Behold (says the Prophet) the Nations are as the drop of the Bucket, and accounted as the small Dust of the Ballance; he holdeth them in the hollow of his Hand: And therefore he can turn them which way he pleaseth; setting up and pulling down; changing and reforming; destroying and supporting. This is his Prerogative; and such a one can indeed help and deliver, but none other as oppos'd to him.*

* Prov. 21. 30.

* Ibid. 40. 12, 15.

† Psal. 99. 1.

|| Is. 59. 1.

And such is his goodness, that he is always ready and at hand to do it, when it is fit and needful for us. * He hath assured us that he delights in exercising Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness: † That he will save *Sion*; || And that they shall prosper, that love him. * If we draw nigh to him, he will draw nigh to us, saith St. *James*. † The Lord is with us while we are with him; || If we seek him, he will be found of us. * Most certain is it that Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; that he is the Saviour; that none can deliver out of his Hand and that he worketh, and none can let it.

And he being the faithful and true One; as we are to persuade our selves, and depend on the Truth of his Promises, so cannot we commit our Selves and our Cause to the Protection of a more secure Friend and Patron. † He is not a Man, that he should lie; nor as the Son of Man that he should repent. If he hath said, he will do it. || Heaven and Earth shall pass away but his Word shall not; he will to the best Purposes make it good to us. He is still a God of Salvation, tho' it doth not come in our way and as we would have it. Some time he sees an afflicted State better for us, than a prosperous one: That this will make us cleave unto whereas the other is apt to warp and estrange us from him. Or there may be some accurse

* *Jer.* 9. 24. † *Pf.* 69. 35. || *Ibid.* 122. 6. * *Jam.* 4. 8.
† *2 Chr.* 15. 2. || *Pf.* 3. 8. * *Is.* 43. 11, 13. † *Numb.* 23. 19.
|| *Luke* 21. 33.

thing, some unmortified Vice or Sin, that hinders the Mercy to descend, and hath yet unfitted us for it. Or God sees fit to try us, to have our Graces embrightned; or prove exemplary to others; that they seeing the Truth and Sincerity of them, may thereby be invited to transcribe them into their own Lives, and glorifie God for such an Encouragement, and that he had put such Treasure into Earthen Vessels; so chang'd and reform'd others, and themselves. This is our Happinefs that whensoever this is, there is generally some other attendant Blessing to ballance and alleviate it. And if we miss it in Temporals, and gain it in Spirituals, it is no bad Bargain; and we have a great deal more reason to rejoice, than grudge at the Exchange. He that procures Heaven, tho' with the loss of all that is near and dear to him in this World, hath made a happy Barter of it. Whereas too lose Heaven, and gain the whole World, would be infinitely more unhappy and improvident. If then God feeds us with the Bread of Affliction here, and reserves for us the better Part, a Kingdom not made with Hands, hereafter; he is in the best Sense a Saviour, when he gives us the most Blessed Salvation. And this all God's Servants may assure themselves of, how mean and sorry soever their Portion, in this Life, is: And therefore they should rather exult, than despond under such Circumstances.

But the gracious Master we serve, best knowing our Temper, and whereof we are made, very rarely suffers things to come to great Extremities. He is so kind, as neither in our Private Concerns, nor those of the Public, to let us be tempted above that we are able; but doth with the Temptation, also make a Way to escape. * He doth not delight greatly to grieve the Children of Men; and therefore he taketh away the smart and pressure from us, or us from it. Extreme things never last long; our Nature will not bear them; and an interposing Providence finds out some Way or other, to rid us of them: Removes the Cause, and then the Effect ceaseth. Some times he prevents the Calamity e're it comes, and so keeps it off from touching us. And when it is the contrary, it is for the most part but short liv'd, and of little continuance. It is longer, or shorter, as best suits with the Designs of his All-wise Providence; and sometimes not at all, as in the present Case. The Mercy of this Day, was, to discover the Blow before it was given, to ward off the Mischief devis'd, from being executed and effected; to preserve this Church and Nation from being a Prey to its most deadly and inveterate Enemies. That of Queen *Mary's*, the First, Reign, was, not to let her have any Issue, and to make it a short one: For had she had Children to continue her Superstition;

* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

or had her Reign been as long as her Sisters; it must have been an unspeakably dreadful Calamity to all true Professors, and impossible, morally speaking, for the Gospel publickly to have been truly preach'd, and have had free course amongst us.

But a good God did not only stretch out his Arm, and shew us what he could do in these Two Instances, in behalf of his Truth and People; but he hath since multiplied his Mercies towards us. It is well known to all that have look'd into the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, how often her Life was hunted after by the same blood-thirsty Faction, like that of a Partridge upon the Mountains; how continued their Attempts were for depriving her of it, as is manifest in our *English* Annals from their own Confessions, when they came to suffer for the Treason; yet God in Mercy still preserved it, dissipating and confounding all their pernicious Practices; giving her Victory and Triumph over the invincible Armado, as they call'd it, but ally, and which they found to be otherwise, to their great Ignominy and Loss; and bringing her after a long and glorious Reign to her Grave in Peace.

In her Successor's Days, King *James* the First's Reign, they repeated the same malicious and destructive Designs; but he who neither Slumbers or Sleeps hindred them from being effected; watched over his Anointed, and would not suffer so much of Hell to appear upon Earth; stop'd

14 *A Sermon Preach'd*

stop'd the Blow, and the Throats of them that contriv'd it, as you have heard.

Next to him was King *Charles* the First, Prince of rare Virtues; and whose only Fault it was, that he was too credulous and condescending to traiterous Hypocrites. They indeed cried down Popery, and made Religion the Pretence, but it was to magnifie and exalt themselves; to fight and spoil, kill and slay, and then take Possession. And accordingly they did so, made this Nation an *Aeldama*, a Field of Blood; murder'd their King, seiz'd on his Crown; plunderd and imprison'd, rifled and sequestered the Estates and Goods of his Loyal Adherents and Subjects; broke in upon our excellent Establishment in Church and State, put up and threw down whom they pleas'd, made themselves Lords and Masters of all, against all Right and Justice; and were arrogant cut Throats and ravening Wolves, the veriest Papist of them all. Such was the sad and desolate Face of Things that the sanctified Reformers, these No-christians brought upon us; and under which we labour'd and groan'd for several Years; till it pleas'd God by a Miracle of Mercy, to put a Period to this truly great Rebellion, by restoring to his just Right the rightful Heir of the Throne, King *Charles* the Second, and with him all our Rights and Liberties both Ecclesiastical and Civil.

And whether it were that the flourishing and prosperous State of the Church of *England*,

once more by Law establish'd, upon his Re-
stitution and Return; or that nothing else
would please and content them but their be-
ing Uppermost, these Sons of Sedition and
Anarchy, the avowed Enemies and Troublers
of our *Israel* return'd to their Vomit, began
again their old Game, and disturb'd his peace-
ful Reign with Plots and Conspiracies. But
the same constant Protector of Rightful and
Righteous Kings and States, brought to light
their malicious and traitorous Designs, and some
of the Authors and Abettors of them to condign
Punishment, and thereby preserv'd the Church
and the Defender of it. Both Papist and Fla-
matic had severally their Turns in this wicked
Work, but it was to their own Confusion; his
merciful Providence discovering and defeating
the *Romish* Plot from abroad, and the *Rie* Plot
at home; and both of them prov'd Abortive
and Improsperous, thanks to our kind Pre-
server.

To him succeeded his Brother in Nature, but
not in Clemency and Prudence, King *James* the
Second; a Prince that might have liv'd and
reign'd happily amongst us, had he not brought
home with him, a Foreign Religion and Go-
vernment; Popery and Arbitrary Power. But
these are Plants that will not grow and thrive
in *English* Ground; the Soil and Climate is too
cold for such fiery Dragoons and Serpents to
breed in; and may they ever prove so. And
his endeavouring to fix these here made his
Govern-

Government so very convulsive, sickly and weak, that it soon portended and foretold its Decay, and that it was near expiring. And it came to pass; for upon God's sending a Foreign Prince to remove these Foreign Weeds from us, to re-implant Laws and Property, and to settle us again upon our old Basis; he chose rather to Abdicate and Relinquish his Crown and Country, than to stay here, and not have a bigotted and false Religion and arbitrary Rule receiv'd and submitted unto by us.

And he being gone, Hereditary Right (which is the true Original *English* one) was to take place, to preserve our Old *English* Monarchy and to forestal any illegal Intrusions and Alterations. And in consequence hereof, it was wisely and justly done of the Three Estates to recognize the Right of the Princess of *Orange* she being the next Heir apparent, or at least presumptive, of which there was any good Constat and Evidence. And if there was a Co-settlement made in behalf of the Prince and upon the account of Survivorship (being of the same Royal Stock) he having so well deserv'd of the Nation; this was no Infraction upon the Succession, when she that was most concern'd, voluntarily receded, and yielded to it upon such an extraordinary Occasion. And by the same Hereditary Right of Succession her present Majesty Queen *ANNE* (as well as her Royal Progenitors) came unto, and now possesseth the Throne of these Kingdoms.

And

And it was no doubt God, the universal Governor of Heaven and Earth that plac'd her there, to be a true Nursing Mother to this Church, a Preserver of our Constitution, and a Defender of his Faith; for the Maintenance of all which, she hath of late, to her immortal Honour, so Heroically and Wisely, and Justly appeared and stood up: And may the multiplied Blessings of Heaven descend upon her for it. The Result of all this is, that this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes; that to him we are to ascribe it, and to own, that all our Deliverance is from him, and that he hath delivered us from our fierce and implacable Adversaries.

But as God hath at all Times mercifully reliev'd and help'd us, so are we to Bless and Praise him for it; the second Thing to be accounted for. *Blessed be the Lord*, says the Psalmist.

To bless God, is to Thank and Glorifie him for all the Wonders of his Love; to own that all the Mercies we enjoy do descend from him; to have a due sense of them upon our Spirits, and to walk and live in some Measure worthy of them. We are not to attribute them to our own Wisdom and Contrivance, but to his from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh; all that we have of this Kind, or that we can pretend unto, being wholly from him. There is nothing in us but what we have receiv'd; Life, Power, Courage, Policy, Forecast, Justice, Righteousness, Temperance, the Love and Fear
D of

of God, and all the good Qualities we are Masters of, are all owing to foreign Bounty : And therefore if we have them, we are to say and declare, * *Not unto us, but unto thy Name give the Praise.* † *It is the Lord that hath made us, and not we our selves ;* and consequently all the Powers and Faculties, and Endowments that are in us. If he makes us, or others Instruments of Good to the Community, We and they are to look up to the Fountain from whence it derives ; to the Original giver. And it is in this Sense, unexceptionably true, that || *God hath made all Things for himself ;* that his own immediate Honour is what he principally respects, and that therefore we Sacrilegiously rob him of it, when we look no farther than meer second Causes ; as if the Blessing was from Man, and not from him, † *Who giveth us all Things richly to enjoy.* It is in him we live, move, and have our Being in all Senses : He is the Breath of our Nostrils, our Stay and Strength, and without whom we can do nothing. And this we should be so firmly persuaded of, as at all Times to retribute unto him all the Glory of our good Deeds. This would fill our Hearts with Thankfulness and our Mouths with Praise, when all that we have, and do enjoy, is only from him, and nothing from our selves. We must all of us, as to this, confess with King *Darius*, * *That he is the living God, and stedfast*

* *Pf. 115. 1.* † *Ib. 100. 3.* || *Prov. 16. 4.* † *1 Tim. 6. 17.*
 * *Dan. 6. 26, 27.*

at Ledbury in Herefordshire. 19

for ever, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed; and his Dominion shall be even to the end. That he delivereth and rescueth, and worketh Signs and Wonders in Heaven and in Earth. And being so justly sensible of his Mercy and Power exerted for our Safety, this will incite us not only to render unto him the *Calves of our Lips*, our *Hallelujahs* and *Hosannahs*, but to consecrate our Lives to his Service in a full and sincere Obedience paid unto him. We shall then take Care that we receive not this his Grace and Kindness in vain; but that as he hath loaded us with his Vouchsafements and Benefits with Protection and Deliverance, so we give and return unto him the utmost that Hearts and Bodies devoted to his Praise, can perform. It is indeed our Interest as well as Duty so to act, when such a Practice will continue him to be a Saviour unto us, and perpetuate the Mercies that are upon us. He hath promised, that those that * Honour him, he will Honour; and that those that † order their Conversation aright, he will shew the Salvation of God. And there being no other Way of doing this, but by a sincere adverting unto, and labouring in the Works and Exercises of our most Holy Religion: How Careful, how Industrious, how Earnest should we be daily so to employ our selves, as not to frustrate the kind Design of Heaven for our Good, and our selves of the Comfort of it,

* 1 Sam. 2. 30.

† Ps. 50. ult.

Ma-
: And
ay and
me give
ade us,
all the
ts that
Instru-
Ve and
whence
it is in
|| God
his own
ally re-
usly rob
an meer
m Man,
l Things
ove, and
e Breath
h, and
And this
as at all
Glory of
Hearts
n Praise,
is only
es. We
th King
steadfast

Tim. 6. 12

for

as thereby to be more endear'd to, favour'd and regarded by it? This will be the most happy and safe Condition that can betide us in this World; and therefore it must be our chiefest Interest and Wisdom to be still given to good Works; and to praise God by fearing him and keeping his Commandments. In short, if we thus Bless and Glorifie him, we shall be Blessed and Preserved by him; but if we despise him we shall be lightly Esteemed.

It may perhaps be now lastly expected, that I should conclude my Discourse with a serious and pathetick Disuasive from Popery, and at large shew and evince the Danger of embracing that Religion, which for Doctrines teacheth the Commandments of Men, thereby making the Word of God of no Effect. And which can encourage and approve, if they are to promote its secular Interest, to enlarge its Power, and extend its Dominion and Empire, of the most hellish Practices, and rebellious Principles (as is easie to instance and prove) that ever appear'd in the World under the guise of Christianity, or of Pretenders to it. I say, this Task may be expected from me, and indeed I should as willingly endeavour to perform it, could I apprehend it necessary after all that hath been spoken; and did not the Occasion of the present Solemnity, and of what you have already heard, sufficiently bar and supersede any farther enlarging on it. For who is there that is touch'd with any real Sense of Holiness, a

just

'd and happy in this chiefest to good him and if we Blessed wife him
 d, that serious and at bracing teacheth making which to pro- Power, of the principles ever ap- of Chris- say, this indeed form it that hath n of the have al- fede any here that pliness, a just
 just Esteem for God and his Word, and is con-
 cern'd for his own Salvation; and withal re-
 members and considers of the horrid Designs
 that were to be executed as on this Day (by that
 Mystery of Iniquity that yet struts and braves it
 in the World) that would willingly run into,
 or desire to be of the Communion of that
 Church, where Regicide, Murthers, Treasons
 and Conspiracies, and all manner of Wicked-
 nesses and Prophanesses have a Shelter and Refuge;
 that (as one well observes) *New Rome* as well
 as *Old Rome*, is an Asylum and Protection for
 Rogues and Villains? The Business of the
 Fifth of *November*, will to all considerate Men
 for ever remain an indeleble Testimony and Ar-
 gument, against the Purity and Excellency of
 the Romish Religion, and be a perpetual Brand
 and Mark of Infamy and Reproach against it
 and its Abettors. To which if we should add
 the horrid Massacrees and Murthers that have
 been devised and acted by the Romanists since
 the Time of the Reformation, in *England*,
France, *Ireland*, *Germany*, and other Parts of
Christendom; who could refrain blessing him-
 self and being astonish'd, that Christianity
 should be thus abused and prostituted, and made
 a Mask and Cover for such cruel Monsters and
 very Devils of Men? For can this be pure and
 undefiled Religion? Can this be Charity, Hu-
 mility, Meekness, Forbearance and Merciful-
 nesses? And yet without these, Christianity is
 only a Sound, and no more. Is not this ra-
 ther

ther a trampling under Foot the Blood of the Covenant, and a doing despite to the Spirit of Grace? Is not this rather a crucifying the Lord afresh and putting him to open Shame? Or can any Thing be more contrary to his Precriptions and Laws, except we would turn the Gospel into a *Turkish Alcoran*? The Scepter of Christ's Kingdom is a Scepter of Righteousness; and the Religion he hath planted among us and enjoyn'd his Followers to receive and embrace, is of all others the most Holy and Spotless; is all Benignity and Kindness; is Love and Peace, and Gentleness, and Goodness, full of Mercy and good Fruits; is a truly Spiritual Thing, not compounded of Worldly Policy, Interest, Ambition and Fraud; but of Self-denial, Heavenly-mindedness, and taking up the Cross; is Righteousness, Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghost; doth not so much consist in Form as Power; is not Pageantry, Pretence and Shew, but real and undissembled Piety; Love * *out of a pure Heart, a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned.* This is the Religion of the Gospel, and they that change and transform it into a quite contrary Shape, do not preach Christ, but themselves. And that the Church of *Rome* hath done this, their damnable Doctrines of Papal Infallibility, of King-deposing, of Heretick-killing, of the meritoriousness of their own Works, of Transubstantiation, of invocation of Saints, of praying

* 1 Tim. I. 5.

to Images, of Pardons and Indulgencies, of receiving in one kind, contrary to our Saviour's Institution; of equalling uncertain Traditions with the Scriptures, as also their compendious Method of murdering Prince and People, and ruining whole Nations at a Blow, do abundantly declare and evince, and are far more prevalent to inspire into all sober Christians a just Hatred and Aversion to Popery, than all the flourishes of Rhetorick, or dint of Argument and Reason that I can possibly make use of, and insinuate into the Minds of Men; in as much as the Conclusions and Deductions we make from Experience are generally true and to be relied on; whereas the others are sometimes false and imposing. But Experience and Reason do both join here, do corroborate each the other; and are a sufficient Confutation of the Truth and Divinity of that Religion, or those Mens Religiousness, that act so contrary to the Gospel. And no Man needs more to satisfy himself of the falseness, absurdity, and danger of any Religion. And he that will not be so persuaded, is fitter to be sent to *Bedlam*, than disputed with.

In fine, all that is necessary to be done by us, is to keep close to the Word of God; to make that the general Rule to try all Spirits and Doctrines by; to take our Measures of believing and living from it; to make a Conscience of performing it, and to beg of God to assist and enable us in so good a Work. If we act thus,
we

24 A Sermon Preach'd

we shall be neither Papist nor Fanatick; and judge him to be in the most secure Condition that hath nothing to do with the ill Opinion and Practises of either. Whatsoever is repugnant to the Will of God, cannot be pleasing to him, and if ever we would make him our Fortress and a Buckler of Defence to us against the Assaults of evil Men, we must begin, go on, and end with Gospel Obedience; this being the true Sacrifice of Praise and Thankfulness we are to offer, and without which all our other Addresses to him will be utterly unacceptable. In a Word, it is with a Holy Life and Sanctified Conversation, that we are to honour and bless God: And if we so approach unto, Fear and Love him our most merciful Preserver; Honour and Obey his Vicegerent our most gracious QUEEN and Sovereign, he will accept us and our Offering, be our Protection and Salvation; impart unto us what is most expedient for us now, and hereafter Crown of Glory in a Kingdom that cannot be moved to Ages of Ages.

And all we beg for Jesus Christ his sake; To whom with the Father, and the blessed Spirit be all Honour, Thanksgiving, Dominion and Obedience now and for ever. Amen.

F. I. N. I. S.

and
ition
union
epug
ing t
n ou
gain
in, g
his be
nkful
all ou
unac
ly Li
are t
proac
ercif
geren
gn, h
Prote
what
after
not b

ke; T
Spir
ion an